

Message Text

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TO AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: WICKER VISIT TO BELFAST

1. NEW YORK TIMES ASSOCIATE EDITOR TOM WICKER PLANS TO VISIT BELFAST MAY 20-25 TO SURVEY GENERAL SITUATION AS PART OF ONE MONTH EUROPEAN TRIP. IRISH DESK OFFICER BRIEFED WICKER, AT HIS REQUEST, MAY 2; ON NORTHERN IRELAND. WICKER SAID HE WISHED TO CALL ON CONSUL GENERAL PENBERTHY AND STAFF TO DISCUSS SITUATION FURTHER AFTER ARRIVAL.

2. DURING HOUR LONG TALK WICKER SHOWED INTEREST IN ORIGINS OF PRESENT CONFLICT AND ROLE OF IRA. (FYI: WICKER WAS ALMOST TOTALLY UNINFORMED.) QUESTION OF CATHOLIC SUPPORT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOR PARTY WAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST. THIS LED TO QUESTIONS ON AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE IRA AND RELATIONSHIP TO LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. WICKER TOOK LENGTHY NOTES AND WAS GOOD LISTENER.

3. WICKER SAID HE PLANS TO DO SOME ARTICLES ON NORTHERN IRELAND AFTER RETURN TO US. WICKER IS RESPECTED AND
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RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN JOURNALIST WHO EVIDENTLY HAS NO AX

TO GRIND NOR PRECONCEPTIONS ON IRISH QUESTION. WE
BELIEVE THAT UNBIASED REPORTING ON THE COMPLEX AND

EMOTIONALLY CHARGED SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND COULD
BE OF POTENTIAL BENEFIT TO FORCES OF MODERATION THERE.
POSTS SHOULD GIVE ALL APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE TO WICKER
AND REPORT SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS. RUSH

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